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Senate Passes Bill to Transfer Ownership of **White Mound County Park in Sauk County**

DNR to sell property back to the county for \$1.00

MADISON – Senate Bill (SB) 276 passed the State Senate unanimously today, moving Sauk County one step closer to formally owning the property where White Mound County Park is located. State Senator Howard Marklein (R-Spring Green) authored SB 76 and it is co-sponsored by Sen. Jon Erpenbach (D-Middleton), Representative Todd Novak (Dodgeville), Rep. Ed Brooks (R-Reedsburg) and Rep. Dave Considine (D-Baraboo).

“Sauk County has developed White Mounds County Park into a valuable asset for the county,” Marklein said. “As they look toward the future and new investments, it makes sense for the state to sell the property back to them to give the county full ownership of the land on which they plan to spend additional county funds.”

SB 276 transfers the property on which White Mound County Park is located. Sauk County purchased the property in 1965, with the intent to create a county park. However, at the time the county did not have a parks department, and subsequently sold the property to the State of Wisconsin for approximately \$25,000.

In 1967, the State Conservation Commission (the predecessor of the Natural Resources Board) granted a perpetual easement to the county for a recreational area open to the general public. The county was also allowed to construct a multiple-use dam on the property.

Sauk County has had the financial responsibility to repair and maintain the dam. In addition, the county has made several improvements to the park, and manages the land to enhance the recreational experience for users.

The Sauk County Parks Department plans future improvements to the park, and has requested the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) sell the land back to the county. SB 276 directs the DNR to sell the land to the county for one dollar, restricts the deed so the land must continue to be used for recreational purposes, and if the land ceases to be used by the county for recreational purposes, it would revert back to the state. The DNR has not expressed concern or opposition.

SB 276 passed the State Senate on Wednesday, June 14, 2017. It now moves to the State Assembly.

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